By the King.

A Proclamation for preuenting the decayes of Churches and Chappels for the time to come.

THe Kings moſt Excellent MAIESTIE hauing of late taken ſpeciall notice of the generall decayes and ruines of Pariſh Churches and Chappels in many parts of this Kingdome, and that by Law the ſame ought to bee repaired and maintained from time to time, at the proper charge of the Inhabitants and occupiers of Lands within thoſe Pariſhes and Chappelries reſpectiuely, Who being altogether careleſſe of their duties therein, haue in many places wilfully neglected the ſame, When with a little charge ſeaſonably beſtowed in time, they might eaſily preuent thoſe great ruines, which afterwards grow more heauy to be ſupported by their owne defaults, and ſomtimes thoſe Churches and Chappels are by them purpoſely ſuffered to runne into ſuch extreame ruine and decay out of hope to obtaine ſome generall Collection, Whereby to ſpare themſelues, and to get the Worke, Which they are bound to doe by law, to bee done by the common purſe of others, ſuch Collections hauing been of late yeeres more frequently granted then heretofore.

His Maieſtie therefore taking this matter into His Princely conſideration, and holding it a great diſhonour to our Chriſtian profeſſion, that the conſecrated places of Gods Worſhip and Diuine Seruice are no better looked vnto, doth by this His Proclamation ſtraitly charge and command all Archbiſhops, Biſhops, Archdeacons, and others to whom it may appertaine, That they take ſpeciall care, each of them within his owne limits and Juriſdiction, that this point of keeping and vpholding the Churches and Chappels from time to time, in good, decent, and ſubſtantiall repaire, bee exactly and duely performed, and therein not to rely vpon the Churchwardens Preſentments, who to ſaue themſelues and their neighbours from charge, will eaſily omit to make knowen the decaies of their Churches and their owne defaults, but either by themſelues in perſon, or by their Officials, or other perſons of Worth and truſt, to take view and ſuruey of

the Churches and Chappels within their ſeuerall Iuriſdictions, and where they finde ought amiſſe, to cauſe the ſame to bee ſpeedily and carefully amended, and to limit and appoint ſet dayes for the doing thereof, that no needfull worke bee deferred too long, and to vſe the power of the Eccleſiaſticall Courts for putting the ſame in due execution. Willing and requiring alſo all his Maieſties Iudges of the Common Law, to bee very carefull and wary, that in theſe caſes which concerne the repaire of Churches and Chappels according to this His Maieſties Princely care, and Royall commandement, the good worke vndertaken in the Eccleſiaſticall Courts bee not interrupted, by their too eaſie granting of Prohibitions, which, as with other caſes, ſo eſpecially in this, would not be granted, but vpon weighty and great cauſe, and vpon ſtrict and due examination.

And to take away from the ſaid Inhabitants and Land-holders of Pariſhes, the hope which they haue heretofore had to relieue themſelues by publique Collections, as alſo to preuent the cauſeleſſe burthening of His louing Subiects, not lyable by the Law to the ſaid reparations, his Maieſtie hereby doeth further charge and command the Lord Keeper of the Great Seale of England, that from henceforth no Letters Patents be granted, nor ſuffered to paſſe the Seale for any Collection for the repayring or new building of any Churches or Chappels, or the Steeples of the ſame, excepting onely in caſe of caſualtie by fire, or extraordinarie violence of Tempeſt, whereby the ſaid Churches, Chappels, or Steeples, are ſuddenly, without the Pariſhioners default, ſo greatly decayed, as the Inhabitants and Land-holders are not able without helpe of others, to repayre or new build the ſame.

All which His Maieſtie doth will and command to bee from henceforth duely and ſtrictly obſerued, aswel by the ſaid Lord Keeper for his part, as by the ſaid Archbiſhops, Biſhops, Iudges, and others for their parts, as they tender His Maieſties good pleaſure and Royall Commandement, that the great inconuenience, and diſhonour of ſuffering the houſes of Gods worſhip and ſeruice, to runne into ruine and decay amongſt vs, may be hereafter carefully preuented.

Giuen at his Maieſties Honour of Hampton Court, the eleuenth day of October, in the fift yeere of His Reigne, of Great Britaine, France, and Ireland.

God ſaue the King.

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